

REMARKS

Claims 1-63 are pending in the application with claims 1, 7, 11, 17, 55 and 56 being independent. Claims 26 and 55-63 have been added.

The title has been amended. No new matter has been added.

In response to the Examiner's objection that claim 26 was missing from the pre-amended sheet, claim 26 has been added.

Claims 1-20, 23, 25-36, 43-45, and 49-54 have been rejected as being anticipated under section 102(e) by UK Patent Application GB 2 348 309 A to Uchida. Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection because Uchida, which is not a U.S. application, is not a proper reference under section 102(e). Moreover, since Uchida was not published until September 27, 2000, which is less than a year before the May 10, 2001, filing date of the present application, it does not qualify as prior art under section 102(b). Finally, since Uchida's publication date is after the date of invention by applicants (as evidenced by the May 11, 2000, filing date of the Japanese application from which this application claims priority), Uchida does not qualify as prior art under section 102(a). Accordingly, since Uchida does not qualify as prior art, the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 21, 22, 24, 37-42 and 46-48 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Uchida in view of Li. Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection because, as discussed above, Uchida does not qualify as prior art with respect to this application, and because Li, standing alone, does not describe or suggest the subject matter of the independent claims from which the rejected claims depend.

Applicant submits that all claims are in condition for allowance.


Applicant : Shunpei YAMAZAKI et al.
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Page : 16 of 16

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Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$754 for excess claim fees (\$334) and the Petition for Extension of Time fee (\$420). Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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John F. Hayden
Reg. No. 37,640

Customer No. 26171
Fish & Richardson P.C.
1425 K Street, N.W., 11th Floor
Washington, DC 20005-3500
Telephone: (202) 783-5070
Facsimile: (202) 783-2331

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